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The SPECTATOR.

Vincit Amor Patriæ ___ Virg.

Friday, October 19. 1711.

THE Ambition of Princes is many times as hurtful to themſelves as their People. This cannot be doubted of ſuch as prove unfortunate in their Wars, but it is often true too of thoſe who are celebrated for their Succeſſes. If a ſevere View were to be taken of their Conduct, if the Profit and Loſs by their Wars could be juſtly ballanc'd, it would be rarely found that the Conqueſt is ſufficient to repay the Coſt.

As I was the other Day looking over the Letters of my Correſpondents, I took this Hint from that of *Philarithmus*; which has turn'd my preſent Thoughts upon Political Arithmetick, an Art of greater Uſe than Entertainment. My Friend has offer'd an Eſſay towards proving, that *Lewis* XIV, with all his Acquiſitions, is not Maſter of more People than at the Beginning of his Wars; nay, that for every Subject he had acquir'd, he had loſt three that were his Inheritance: If *Philarithmus* is not miſtaken in his Calculations, *Lewis* muſt have been impoveriſh'd by his Ambition.

The Prince for the publick Good has a ſoveraign Property in every private Perſon's Eſtate; and conſequently his Riches muſt encreaſe or decreaſe in Proportion to the Number and Riches of his Subjects. For Example: If Sword or Peſtilence ſhould deſtroy all the People of this Metropolis, (God forbid there ſhould be Room for ſuch a Suppoſition! but if this ſhould be the Caſe) the Queen muſt needs loſe a great Part of her Revenue, or, at leaſt, what ſhe charg'd upon the City muſt encreaſe the Burthen upon the reſt of her Subjects. Perhaps the Inhabitants here are not above a tenth Part of the Whole; yet as they are better fed, and cloath'd, and lodg'd than her other Subjects, the Cuſtoms and Exciſes upon their Conſumption, the Impoſts upon their Houſes, and other Taxes, do very probably make a fifth Part of the whole Revenue of the Crown. But this is not all; the Conſumption of the City takes off a great Part of the Fruits of the whole Iſland; and as it pays ſuch a Proportion of the Rent or yearly Value of the Lands in the Country, as it is the Cauſe of paying ſuch a Proportion of Taxes upon thoſe Lands. The Loſs then of ſuch a People muſt needs be ſenſible to the Prince, and viſible to the whole Kingdom.

On the other Hand, if it ſhould pleaſe God to drop from Heaven a new People equal in Number and Riches to the City, I ſhould be ready to think their Exciſes, Cuſtoms, and Houſe-Rent would raiſe as great a Revenue to the Crown as would be loſt in the former Caſe. And as the Conſumption of this new Body would be a new Market for the Fruits of the Country, all the Lands, eſpecially thoſe moſt adjacent, would riſe in their yearly Value, and pay greater yearly Taxes to the Publick. The Gain in this Caſe would be as ſenſible as the former Loſs.

Whatſoever is aſſeſs'd upon the General is levied upon Individuals. It were worth the while then to conſider what is paid by, or by Means of the meaneſt Subjects, in order to compute the Value of every Subject to the Prince.

For my own Part, I ſhould believe that ſeven Eighths of the People are without Property in themſelves or the Heads of their Families, and forc'd to work for their daily Bread; and that of this Sort there are ſeven Millions in the whole Iſland of *Great Britain*: And yet one would imagine that ſeven Eighths of the whole People ſhould conſume at leaſt three Fourths of the whole Fruits of the Country. If this is the Caſe, the Subjects without Property, pay three Fourths of the Rents, and conſequently enable the landed Men to pay three Fourths of their Taxes. Now if ſo great a Part of the Land-Tax were to be be divided by ſeven Millions, it would amount to more than three Shillings to every Head. And thus as the Poor are the Cauſe, without which the Rich could not pay this Tax, even the pooreſt Subject is upon this Account worth three Shillings yearly to the Prince.

Again: One would imagine the Conſumption of ſeven Eighths of the whole People ſhould pay two Thirds of all the Cuſtoms and Exciſes. And if this Sum too ſhould be divided by ſeven Millions, *viz.* the Number of poor People, it will amount to more than ſeven Shillings to every Head: And therefore with this and the former Sum, every poor Subject, without Property, except of his Limbs or Labour, is worth at leaſt ten Shillings yearly to the Sovereign. So much then the Queen loſes with every one of her old, and gains with every one of her new Subjects.

When I was got into this way of thinking, I preſently grew conceited of the Argument, and was juſt preparing to write a Letter of Advice to a Member of Parliament, for opening the Freedom of our Towns and Trades, for taking away all Manner of Diſtinctions between the Natives and Foreigners, for repealing our Laws of Pariſh Settlements, and removing every other Obſtacle to the Increaſe of the People. But as ſoon as I had recollected with what inimitable Eloquence my Fellow-Labourers had exaggerated the Miſchiefs of ſelling the Birthright of *Britons* for a Shilling, of ſpoiling the pure *Britiſh* Blood with foreign Mixtures, of introducing a Confuſion of Languages and Religions, and of letting in Strangers to eat the Bread out of the Mouths of our own People, I became ſo humble as to let my Project fall to the Ground, and leave my Country to encreaſe by the ordinary way of Generation.

As I have always at Heart the Publick Good, ſo I am ever contriving Schemes to promote it; and I think I may without Vanity pretend to have contriv'd ſome as wiſe as any of the Caſtle-builders. I had no ſooner given up my former Project, but my

Head

Head was presently full of draining Fens and Marshes, banking out the Sea, and joyning new Lands to my Country; for since it is thought impracticable to increase the People to the Land, I fell immediately to consider how much would be gained to the Prince by increasing the Land to the People.

If the same omnipotent Power which made the World, should at this time raise out of the Ocean and join to *Great Britain* an equal Extent of Land, with equal Buildings, Corn, Cattle, and other Conveniences and Necessaries of Life, but no Men, Women, nor Children, I should hardly believe this would add either to the Riches of the People or Revenue of the Prince; for since the present Buildings are sufficient for all the Inhabitants, if any of them should forsake the old to inhabit the new Part of the Island, the Increase of House-Rent in this would be attended with at least an equal Decrease of it in the other: Besides, we have such a Sufficiency of Corn and Cattle, that we give Bounties to our Neighbours to take what exceeds of the former off our Hands, and we will not suffer any of the latter to be imported upon us by our Fellow Subjects; and for the remaining Product of the Country, 'tis already equal to all our Markets: But if all these things should be doubled to the same Buyers, the Owners must be glad with half their present Prices, the Landlords with half their present Rents; and thus by so great an Enlargement of the Country, the Rents in the whole would not increase, nor the Taxes to the Publick.

On the contrary, I should believe they would be very much diminished; for as the Land is only valuable for its Fruits, and these are all perishable, and for the most Part must either be used within the Year, or perish without Use, the Owners will get rid of them at any Rate, rather than they should waste in their Possession: So that 'tis probable the annual Production of those perishable things, even of one Tenth Part of them, beyond all Possibility of Use, will reduce one half of their Value. It seems to be for this Reason that our Neighbour Merchants who ingross all the Spices, and know how great a Quantity is equal to the Demand, destroy all that exceeds it. It were natural then to think that the Annual Production of twice as much as can be used, must reduce all to an Eighth Part of their present Prices; and thus this extended Island wou'd not exceed one Fourth Part of its present Value, or pay more than one Fourth Part of the present Tax.

It is generally observ'd, That in Countries of the greatest Plenty there is the poorest Living; like the Schoolmen's Ass, in one of my Speculations, the People almost starve between two Meals. The Truth is, the Poor, which are the Bulk of a Nation, work only that they may live; and if with two Days Labour they can get a wretched Subsistence for a Week, they will hardly be brought to work the other four: But then with the Wages of two Days they can neither pay such Prices for their Provisions, nor such Excises to the Government.

That Paradox therefore in old *Hesiod* πολὺ πλέον ἥμισυ παντὸς or Half is more than the Whole, is very applicable to the present Case; since nothing is more true in political Arithmetick, than that the same People with half a Country is more valuable than with the whole. I begin to think there was nothing absurd in Sir *W. Petty*, when he fancied if all the Highlands of *Scotland* and the whole Kingdom of *Ireland* were sunk in the Ocean, so that the People were all saved and brought into the Lowlands of *Great Britain*; nay though they were to be reimburst the Value of their Estates by the Body of the People, yet both the Soveraign and the Subjects in general would be enriched by the very Loss.

If the People only make the Riches, the Father of ten Children is a greater Benefactor to his Country than he who has added to it 10000 Acres of Land and no People. It is certain *Lewis* has joyned vast Tracts of Land to his Dominions: But if *Pilarithmus* says true, that he is not now Master of so many Subjects as before; we may then account for his not being able to bring such mighty Armies into the Field, and for their being neither so well fed, nor cloathed, nor paid as formerly. The Reason is plain, *Lewis* must needs have been impoverished not only by his Loss of Subjects, but by his Acquisition of Lands.

By Her Majesty's Company of Comedians.

AT the Theatre Royal in Drury-Lane, this present Friday, being the 19th of October, will be presented a Comedy call'd the Busy Body. The Part of Marplot to be perform'd by Mr. Pack, Sir George Airy by Mr. Wilks, Sir Francis Gripe by Mr. Estcourt, Sir Jealous Traffique by Mr. Bullock, Charles by Mr. Mills, Miranda by Mrs. Bicknell, Nabinda by Mrs. Porter, Patch Mrs. Saunders.

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